

New Expense Funds For Top Officials Held Indefensible

Tax-Free Allotments That
Need Not Be Accounted
For Are Assailed

By Frank R. Kent

Probably the \$6,000,000 which it is reported Mr. Truman now asks for renovation of the White House is needed and should be given just as were the salary increases voted before the inauguration. Probably it would be petty to oppose. However, the request has considerably stimulated feeling concerning the new Presidential "expense" funds—a feeling which has existed ever since they were provided.

Prior to that, there were a great many sentimental editorials and columns concerning the poor, dear President who was unable to get along on \$75,000 a year with a \$40,000 expense account for travel and entertainment and a rent-free house. Also there was much sympathy showered upon the poor, dear Vice President, Mr. Barkley, and the poor, dear Speaker, Mr. Rayburn—a bachelor—who had to live on a measly \$20,000 a year with a large Government-supplied automobile and a Government-paid chauffeur thrown in.

Practically no opposition. Though not one of these three gentlemen had earned in private life anything approaching those salaries there was practically no opposition to the proposals to raise them. Congress voted Mr. Truman a \$25,000 increase and the Messrs. Barkley and Rayburn each \$10,000 more. When one is told how difficult it was for these officials to make both ends meet, no one wanted to seem small enough to say no. Nor is it intended to say here that this action should not have been taken. What is intended is to point out that if Congress had stopped with the salary increases there would not now be the soreness a good many members feel about the way they were jockeyed into what seems now a somewhat indefensible position.

For, on top of that \$40,000 annual presidential expense fund, for which the President has to render account, Congress piled on \$50,000 more "expense" money for which he does not have to account at all and which is entirely tax exempt. At the same time it provided the Vice President and the Speaker each with tax-exempt \$10,000-a-year expense money for which they do not have to account either. Now, several rather trenchant points are being made concerning all this tax-exempt, not-to-be-accounted-for money.

Four Points Listed.

In respect to the \$50,000 for Mr. Truman the points are:

- (1) That it is basically indefensible to appropriate money out of the United States Treasury for "expenses" unless it is to be accounted for;
- (2) The President in the last fiscal year was able to spend only 80 per cent, or \$32,000, of his \$40,000 expense fund, the balance of \$8,000 reverting to the Treasury. In no year since he has been in office has he spent anywhere near the full amount;
- (3) The tax-free feature of the not-to-be-accounted-for \$50,000, added to his increased salary, gives Mr. Truman, in effect, a total salary considerably in excess of \$300,000.
- (4) The action of Congress in voting the tax-free expense funds to the President, the Vice President and the Speaker makes it much more difficult for these officials and Congress to take any step toward reducing the size and cost of government.

Effect Not Small.

It may seem a small thing, but it is contended, it is not small in principle nor in effect. Certainly, it does not enhance the prospects of the Hoover Commission's plan which depends wholly upon the character of its administration support. No one really objects to the salary increases. But, distinctly, that is not the case with the tax-free "expense" funds.

The only two Democratic Senators who voted against them at the time were Senators Byrd of Virginia and Gillette of Iowa, but a good many more have been expressing regret since. Nor does the fact that some time ago when their own salaries to \$12,500, they appropriated \$2,500 (tax free and nonaccountable) for the "expenses" of each member ameliorate the situation. Soon or late, other tax-exempt, nonaccountable appropriations for "expenses" seem sure to follow. Why not?

This Changing World

Rising Religious Persecution Forecast
In All Countries Behind Iron Curtain

By Constantine Brown

Religious persecution in all countries behind the Iron Curtain is expected to become even more serious in the next few months. Washington diplomats are not convinced that there is a close link between growing intensification of the cold war and increasing persecution of the clergy of all religious denominations behind the Iron Curtain.

However, they do regard the trial of Josef Cardinal Mindszenty and the indictments of Protestant clergymen in Bulgaria as the result of increased passive resistance in the satellite states to the rulers appointed by Moscow. Similar trials are expected



Constantine Brown.

On the Other Hand

Dewey Seen Following Economics Line
Of Party Despite Warning on Reaction

By Lowell Mellett

The most important thing said by the self-styled titular leader of the young elder statesman of the Republican Party the other night was this:

"If, as a party, we try to go back to the 19th century or even to the 1920s, you can bury the Republican Party as the deadest pigeon in the country."

From the immediate context, Gov. Dewey may have been thinking in purely political terms, warning his listeners that the party never would get enough votes to return to power unless it accepted permanent the social gains achieved during the New Deal days. He mentioned farm price support, unemployment insurance, old age benefits, slum clearance and other such programs. He did not, however, seem to recognize the real distance that separates the 40s from the 20s.

It is refreshing to have the Republican Party's two-time presidential candidate admit that the party's thinking in the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover era was bad. But it is not certain that he understands just how bad it was. The thinking then was that booms were due to Republican policies, but that busts were acts of God—usually stated as "world conditions over which we have no control." Depressions, it was believed, came in cycles and there was nothing anybody could do about it.

The real achievement of the New Deal was its successful challenge of this long-accepted theory. At least, that will be the real achievement if the challenge continues to be successful. Sustained prosperity for the whole population will mean more in terms of the general welfare than all the social legislation that can be devised. And yet, Gov. Dewey talks like most of his fellow party leaders when measures designed to exercise some control over the national economy, for the very purpose of sustaining our prosperity, are suggested.

"Who," he demands, "is going to save a thousand dollars, or borrow a thousand dollars from his uncle to start a little business or build a filling station or anything else, if he knows that the Government may build one across the street, tax free, and run him out of business?"

Follows G. O. P. Party Lines. Just what the Government has done, is doing or tending to do, to conjure up this awful picture in the Governor's mind, it is impossible to guess. What the nephew in question has to be concerned about, if he has filling station ambitions, is whether one of the big oil corporations is likely to build one of its handsome chain numbers across the street. Uncle Esso or Uncle Shell, perhaps, but not Uncle Sam.

The Government is taking an interest in oil, to be sure. It is asserting the Nation's title to the vast tideland oil deposits, but only to protect the national interest against reckless exploitation. Gov. Dewey took issue with this policy during the campaign.

For all his brave words, calculated to set him apart from the party's mossbacks in some respects, the Governor seems prepared to follow the party line in the field of economics, the unlimited free enterprise line of the United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers.



Lowell Mellett.

every town, village and hamlet throughout the U. S. S. R.

Similar tactics now have been adopted in the satellite states. Priests and ministers are formally accused of being traitors to their country and blackmarketers who live luxurious lives at a time when the people themselves are working hard to achieve the various five-year and two-year plans.

Men who are accustomed to a frugal life as are the servants of the Protestant and Catholic Churches behind the Iron Curtain, are compelled to "confess" under severe cross-examination—including the worst third-degree methods—to all the crimes public prosecutors want them to.

These persecutions are regarded by well-informed sources as indicating a degree of concern among the rulers of countries behind the Iron Curtain. Ever since Marshal Tito openly defied Moscow's authoritarian rule a certain amount of uneasiness has developed in the satellite states.

Passive Resistance Carried On.

Completely deprived of any weapons with which they could stage an uprising, the people are not thinking in terms of rebellion yet. But they are carrying on a somewhat sneering passive resistance to Moscow's agents. This explains why Romania's police forces have been disbanded. They could not be relied on entirely. It also explains why there has been a great purge of the Czech army, where only officers with "unquestionably sound" political views are kept in the armed forces.

Since Bulgaria, Poland and Yugoslavia have been forced behind the Iron Curtain only in the last three years, their populations have not been indoctrinated sufficiently with a hatred of religion and the ministers and priests still play an important role.

To discredit these men of God is one of the tasks which the governments of the satellite countries have set themselves for the immediate future.

On the Record

Gunther's Book on Son's Fatal Illness
Held Due to Outlive His 'Inside' Books

By Dorothy Thompson

John Gunther's "Death Be Not Proud," a memorial to his young son, Johnny, will live, I think, beyond all his famous "Inside" reports on states and societies because it is a report on the eternal mysteries: Life, death and love.

Within 24 hours after it appeared, a distinguished physician said "This book must be read by every medical student to teach him that medicine does not deal just with 'cases'."

Hardly had the book appeared when a mother, whose son—like Johnny—had died of a malignant brain tumor, found release from a crushing sense of guilt. "I never had money for the greatest specialists; had I found it my child might have lived. I let him down." But Johnny Gunther's parents spent a fortune on him, the greatest specialists were at his service. None in the world knows how to cure what these children had. So the mother is released, to face and deal with life again.

During the last weeks of his illness, Johnny's mother frantically begged her friends: "Pray for a miracle for Johnny." And we prayed many, many times, in concentrated petition to God for a miracle for Johnny.

Life's Mission Not a Failure. Were those prayers unanswered? A miracle of parenthood occurred: A mother and father, long separated, met in immense love for their child, each of them.



Dorothy Thompson.

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whatever science may achieve, all that is born must die. beyond this, Johnny died, and Johnny lives, that we should all try to be more like Johnny. (Released by the Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

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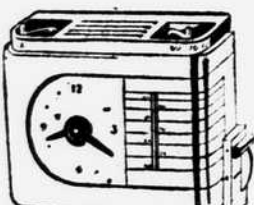


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